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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DPC 57

ON THE RECORD UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED

TRANSCRIPT OF PRESS AND RADIO NEWS BRIEFING, WEDNESDAY,  
March 27, 1963, 12:25 pm EST

MR. WHITE: Gentlemen, we have one release which is being distributed to you now, namely No. 157, which is the text of an address by the Honorable U. Alexis Johnson, Deputy Under Secretary of State, to the Chicago Conference on Agricultural Trade with Japan. This is for publication at 12:15 tomorrow. Today is Wednesday, isn't it?

Q Yes.

A Yes. Secondly, I have a very sad note to strike here. The Department has been informed of the sudden death last night of Selden Chapin, former Director General of the United States Foreign Service and one-time Ambassador to the Netherlands, Panama, Iran, and Peru, and Minister to Hungary. Mr. Chapin suffered a heart attack at the San Juan, Puerto Rico, airport, where he was awaiting a plane, waiting to board a plane bound for Lisbon. Mr. Chapin, who has been living at Water Isle, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, was on the way to Lisbon to meet his wife there upon her return from Sikkim, where she was attending the wedding of the couple's niece, Hope Cook. As most of you are aware, Mr. Chapin had a long and distinguished career

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be back on the streets tomorrow.

That is all I have, gentlemen.

I have some further biographic material on Chapin, if anyone wants it.

Q When did he die, Linc?

A He died last night at the San Juan airport, Puerto Rico.

Q Linc, do you have any response to the Soviet protest made public in Moscow earlier today, blaming the United States for that recent Alpha 66 raid, shooting up the Russians ships?

A Well, characteristically, we read all about it on the ticker. We have not received a copy of it. However, the answer to it I think is quite simple: Simply to refer you to a statement we made on March 19, which I have read here on several occasions. I will read it again.

The United States Government is strongly opposed to hit-and-run attacks on Cuba by splinter refugee groups. It has stated repeatedly that such raids do not weaken the grip of the Communist regime on Cuba. Indeed, they may strengthen it. Nothing we have heard of the latest incident changes our judgment on this matter. Rather it reinforces our belief that these irresponsible and ineffective forays serve to increase the difficulty of dealing with the unsatisfactory situation which now exists

in the Caribbean.

Q Has there been any response from Moscow to that recent note on these Alaskan overflights?

A No; we have had no reply to that, to our note on that subject.

Q You announced, Linc, some time ago that an investigation was underway into this Alpha 66 incident?

A Yes.

Q Are there any results to report on that?

A I have had no fill-in, if there are any, on this.

Q Linc, there is a story today indicating that maybe the U. S. complaint and the note on the overflight on the Alaskan overflight, had overstated the case. Is there any reason for you to think that anything in the American note was incorrect?

A No. I take it that you are referring to a story that has recently moved on the ticker. I simply point out that this story contains wordage which is not contained in our note to the Soviet Union. The facts as I know them are those given to you at the time this note was released, namely on March 16.

Q Linc, can I come back on this Soviet protest note?

A Yes.

Q The Soviets, as I understand it, asked for some effective measures by the United States to prevent further incidents like this. What is the position of this Government on that?

A I would say, on a BACKGROUND basis, that such incidents would not be appearing were it not for what the Soviet Union has done in Cuba itself. You speak of incidents of Alpha 66, which we do not condone. Indeed, I have just stated how irresponsible these are. There were certain other incidents in Cuba, including the introduction of nuclear weapons into Cuba, which I think should also be considered in this over-all situation.

Q Linc, I think that there was some wording in the Soviet note to the effect that there was an agreement by the United States and the Soviet Union against such attacks. Do you know of any such agreement?

A I do not. And let me make abundantly clear again, that this Government does everything it possibly can to prevent such incidents from happening from U. S. territory.

Q Do you have any late word on troop withdrawals, Soviet troop withdrawals from Cuba?

A No, sir.

Q Well, are we seeking any information from the Soviet Union on their intentions? Towards the beginning

of March the President indicated that toward the end of March might be some kind of dividing line.

A Yes. I can't answer that question. I just don't know.

Q Linc, do you know of any invitation from the Vatican for the President to see the Pope on his trip to Rome?

A I am sorry. I don't know the answer to that. I would suggest that that question be directed to Mr. Salinger.

Q It was.

A It was?

Q Any further travel plans of Mr. Ball?

A If there are, I am unaware of them.

Q Thank you, sir.

A You are very welcome.

[Whereupon, at 12:37 p.m., the press conference was concluded.]

LINCOLN WHITE

ECM